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Commentary: Dr Arne, Soviet art books, Wallace Stevens

"He carried that terrible trophy by the hair, . . . to where the Doves sat/Drinking the Quince among them. . . ." one of Iaroslav Baskin's illustrations for an edition of Benvenuto published by the University of Massachusetts Press in 1971. It is one of the selection of his drawings and graphics I show at the Hobson Gallery, 44 Hobson Street, Cambridge, until March 24 (not Mondays). During the exhibition there will be poetry readings by Ruth Kahlilght (next Wednesday, February 16), Ted Hughes (February 20), and Elaine Feinstein (February 22). The copy of Hughes's *Cave Birds* on display includes a number of new drawings by the author. Ted Hughes's new books, as well as three new poems by Ted Hughes, Baskin (the original books to be seen are *Thorn Gun's* Mandarakes, *Sylvio*, *Plum*, *Pursuit*, and *The Divine Comedy*), and there are also etchings done for editions by Baskin's *Celebrum* Press of Oshelle and Titus Andronicus.

Fiction: Jerzy Kosinski, Jose Donoso, Henry Green

Commentary: Dr Arne,
Soviet art books,
Wallace Stevens

The poetry of Swift; 'Dr Woodward's Shield'

Tigers, Keynesians, 'Pananas', 'Eyes, Etc'

Translating Aquinas

Power and the Pax Romana

By P. A. Brunt

EDWARD N. LUTTWAK:
The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire
From the First Century AD to the Third
255pp. Johns Hopkins University Press. £9.70.

In the last two centuries before Christ, Rome, already mistress of Italy, extended her dominion over the whole Mediterranean basin, and then in the north to the Channel, Rhine and Danube. This dominion included not only provinces under direct administration but also "free" cities, kingdoms and tribes which owed her allegiance; Augustus regarded such client states as parts of the empire; their actual annexation cannot then be regarded as imperial expansion. Romans claimed that their city was divinely destined to rule the world, or boasted that it did actually rule the world, conceived in a more limited sense and consisting only of those states and nations with which she had dealings. They found it easy to justify wars against neighbouring peoples which did not duly recognize their authority and which very independence seemed to constitute a threat to the security of the lands under their government or protection. As late as A.D. 6 Augustus still hoped to subdue Boeotia, and Corinthus at least as far as the Illyria. Great revolts then led him to abandon his plans of expansion.

From that time Rome was normally content to preserve the security of her existing dominion. There were only rare departures from this aim: Claudius's only attested motive for invading Britain is his desire for the glory of extending Roman rule beyond the Ocean, and Trajan's expedition of Dacia (Romania) and his would-be conquests in the east, may be seen as a revival of aggressive imperialism. But to some extent Trajan too may have been seeking to establish more secure frontiers: certainly other imperial extensions of Roman territory can be so explained. Edward N. Luttwak's remarkable book is a study of Roman strategy in the period when Rome's strategy was essentially defensive.

The author is, to quote J. F. Gilliam's foreword, "a specialist in strategic analysis and contemporary international relations". His own preface explains why the work was written. He is dissatisfied with Clausewitzian notions of the primacy and desirability of offensive warfare in pursuit of decisive results, which "imply a sharp distinction between the state of

peace and the state of war". But now, "we, like the Romans, face the prospect not of decisive conflict, but of a permanent state of war, albeit limited. We, like the Romans, must actively protect an advanced society against a variety of threats rather than concentrate on destroying the forces of our enemies in battle".

An appendix makes a sharp distinction between power and force, which is of primary significance for his analysis of changing Roman strategy. Power is "consumed in application", and "military force is governed by constraints on accumulation, use, transmission, and dispersion akin to the physical laws that condition mechanical force", whereas power

works not by causing effects directly, but by eliciting responses—if all goes well, the desired responses. The powerful issue on order, and those subject to their power obey and carry out the required action themselves. One, two, or a thousand prisoners of war who walk to their place of internment in response to an order that they choose to obey do not consume the power to which their obedience is a response; in contrast the physical removal of fifty demonstrators requires much less force than the removal of fifty thousand.

A strategy that relies on power rather than on force in this far more economical of limited resources.

Now the resources of the Roman

empire were certainly limited. Edward Luttwak writes of a "chronic shortage of manpower". That might be doubted. In Augustus's time the number of men under arms probably exceeded 300,000, far more than the Republic had maintained. Perhaps he fixed it so high to carry out his programme of expansion. But the subsequent adoption of a defensive posture did not produce any economy of manpower. On the contrary, the size of the army was greater in the second century AD, and rose further after the crisis of the third to a nominal strength of over 600,000.

Now Augustus, it is true, could not enlist sufficient Italians except by resorting to conscription on a scale that appeared politically undesirable. Hence, in his reign more than half the soldiers were already provincials. By the second century the armies were recruited almost entirely in or near the regions where they were permanently stationed. This made it easier to attract volunteers, who doubtless made better fighting material; men were rendered to enlist for twenty-five years' service if they were not so likely to be separated from their homes and kin. In the last period of the western empire the government had to rely to a significant extent on barbarian mercenaries, but perhaps this reflects a decline in the fighting spirit of Rome's subjects, which itself needs explanation that cannot be attempted here.

However, although before the fourth century sufficient recruits for the army could readily be found, they were largely taken out of pro-

ductive employment, and had to be paid and supplied from the resources of an economy which by modern standards was underdeveloped. Already in the late first century Domitian declared that the provinces could barely support the demands that were inescapable. The additional taxation that was required in the late empire, when the army was so greatly increased (a fact Luttwak does not bring out), has often been regarded as a prime cause of the ultimate collapse. Fiscal exactions laid impoverished the subjects and diminished their loyalty. It was therefore always in Rome's interest to rely more on "power" than on "force".

However important this distinction may be, and however Roman strategy may show that Clausewitz's principles have no universal applicability, one may doubt if the Roman experience has anything more to teach the modern world. Among Rome's potential enemies there was only one powerful civilized state, the Parthian kingdom of the Arsacids and its successor, Sassanid Persia. The Arsacids were generally unaggressive, and it was not until the third century that Rome was exposed to constant danger on the eastern front. Only the Parthians and Persians, and the Sarmatians, had strong cavalry forces, and the Sassanids alone of Rome's enemies developed sophisticated siege technology. Equipment, especially in artillery, and discipline for long gave Roman troops a clear superiority, especially in battles and sieges.

Luttwak observes that the less suited to guerrilla warfare than when their enemies had fixed assets to protect, their strategy could be that of exterminating the population; this strategy, he adds, had ultimately enabled Rome to subdue the wildest peoples in the most rugged country. The barbarian tribes that plagued all frontiers except the Danube and Rhine were individually weak and incapable of more than transient and inconceivable, and combined attacks on every frontier were these considerations. Breaks in the frontier were not only because of Sassanid advances, but because of Vandal invasions which pressed German tribes to seek new homes within the Roman empire, which thus affected the fate of a empire, though their origins lay Asian steppes lay beyond the view of its government.

However, whether or not the divisions of Roman strategy were different from those which should determine planning in the modern world, the study of Roman history is "for Luttwak's own reward", and his comments on that study merit attention. One right, he is not a specialist in the field, but he has examined ancient evidence for himself, and as it is, and read widely modern works; errors and omissions seem to be rare. He writes in a self-named authority, rightly so, that "no study comparable to this book exists". Lucidly and vigorously written, it presents a picture of the Roman world that is not to be found elsewhere.

Luttwak distinguishes three phases of Rome's grand strategy: the first the Roman army was not deployed on the provinces, there were no frontier fortifications or patrols. Many legions remained in the interior, and everywhere troops were dispersed as much as small internal rebellions as to quell foreign attacks, at commandments during which they could carry out offensive or even major operations. For special purposes very few legions could be concentrated to protect provinces against "local trouble", and especially in the case of client princes, who supplied the provinces against barbarians and could absorb the first shock of serious attacks.

Barbarian tribes too could be induced to vassalage by more conspicuous shows of force or by

the threat of force. The second phase was a defensive one, and the third a more aggressive one. The first phase was a defensive one, and the second a more aggressive one. The first phase was a defensive one, and the second a more aggressive one.

This system was far from perfect, and it was not until the second century that Rome was exposed to constant danger on the eastern front. Only the Parthians and Persians, and the Sarmatians, had strong cavalry forces, and the Sassanids alone of Rome's enemies developed sophisticated siege technology. Equipment, especially in artillery, and discipline for long gave Roman troops a clear superiority, especially in battles and sieges.

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Barbarian tribes too could be induced to vassalage by more conspicuous shows of force or by

So long as this system worked effectively, Rome could give continuous security to life and property even in the frontier provinces. The troops were thus to a large extent defending their own homelands. That may be one factor, which perhaps Luttwak does not sufficiently stress, in the preference for "pre-emptive defence". He indicates that the units tended to become fixed in particular sectors, and even when it was necessary to transfer troops to another sector, it was usual to move not whole units but detachments drawn from all or most of the units in a province. The soldiers concerned had then good hope of returning to base, where increasingly they now enjoyed a family life.

Such transfers were necessary when there was a threat in one theatre, or, perhaps for the local population to meet. Of course they weakened the defences in the areas from which troops were withdrawn. Rome punished with good reason the improbability of major attacks occurring simultaneously on several fronts. No grave danger of attack developed even in 68-70, when the defences were dislocated by civil wars, and though Roman authority on the Rhine then totally collapsed, it could at once be restored by a great concentration of force. There was more danger if weakness in any sector were visible and prolonged. Hence under Marcus Aurelius a major Parthian war encouraged large-scale troop movements occurring simultaneously on several fronts. No grave danger of attack developed even in 68-70, when the defences were dislocated by civil wars, and though Roman authority on the Rhine then totally collapsed, it could at once be restored by a great concentration of force.

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Well under control

By Anne Stevenson

EDGAR BOWERS: *Living Together* 84pp. Manchester: Carcanet. £2.90.

PETER DAVISON: *A Voice in the Mountain* 61pp. New York: Atheneum. \$4.95.

BARBARA HOWES: *A Private Signal* 187pp. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press. \$8.50 (paperback, \$4.45).

It is a good season for the respectable poets of America. The publication of new books by Richard Wilbur, Anthony Hecht and Elizabeth Bishop in the past year has refreshingly opened what might, five years ago, have been regarded as a permanently blocked door. And new fresh collections from Edgar Bowers, Peter Davison and Barbara Howes offer further proof that intelligent control of language in poetry—lately dismissed by the red-skinned avant-garde as "cooked" concoctions of "poetic-faces" and academic intellectuality—has never really deserted the American scene. For this reason, but not for this reason alone, all these books should be welcomed by the more fastidious English.

There is no doubt that all three of these collections are the work of intelligent, discriminating artists. The late Yvor Winters would have found especial occasion to rejoice in Edgar Bowers's *Living Together*, since Professor Bowers usually fits the classical metres neatly into the shapes prescribed by Dr Winters's rules for excellence. Those who are not wholly of Professor Winters's opinion with regard to what is good and bad in poetry may have certain reservations about Bowers's book, but I doubt that these reservations would extend to the title poem itself. At his best—as he surely is in this poem—Edgar Bowers balances form and emotion marvelously. "Living Together" is a poem modelled more on Stevens's "Notes for a Supreme Fiction" than on Winters's injunctions. The relationship is a question of between post and music—or between poet and whatever power moves into the artist's mind as he creates: Of you I have no memory, keep no promise.

But, as I read, drink, wait and watch the surf, Faithful, almost forgotten, your demand Becomes all others, and this land, Beneath the lamp, attentive, like a sound I listen for, you draw near—closer, surer.

Then speech, or sight, or love, or love returned. It is worth noting that the poem is unrhymed, unforced metrically; it has the "natural" form of the best American free verse, although, as so often in Stevens, it is held together by a skeletal iambic pentameter. Turn the page and suddenly we are back in Winters's landscape. A longish sequence called "Wandering" takes no risks with rhyme or metre. There is so much control of language that what is said becomes obscure, even personal, even a shade vain.

Forty years young! The spectral I wanders toward will seem familiar, for In future pasts, when I, wild old defiance, dignity it in private consequence. There is less digression, however, in these formal stanzas (also about the writer and his work) than in the simple free statement of the lines quoted above. It is perhaps ungenerous to suggest that Professor Bowers's book suffers from a too excellent, too self-conscious control of his ideas. Such control by and through language is admirable, but a reader does not want to read language alone. When a man can write so well without metrical props as he does in a sequence called "Autumn Shade" when he lets his lambs breathe—why depend upon them so much? The question is half answered in his opening poem "To a Reader":

My soul repays me, Who fix it by a rhythm, with terror Of hearing the swift motion that betrays me.

In poetry, however, "swift motion" is not always a betrayal. I wish Edgar Bowers were less afraid of it. An easier, or at least more readily accessible, poet is Peter Davison, whose *A Voice in the Mountain* is a pleasant, intelligent collection by one who obviously wants to be understood. There is much that is elegant here, but it is an elegance tempered with urbanity and a good narrative technique. Peter Davison has obviously learnt much from Robert Frost. "Making Much of Oracles", a tale about saving oracles from a felled elm, is written in competent Frostian iambs and it ends in a predictably Frostian moral:

But a nest is no place to argue a song that in its very nature has no end. The second year the oracles found an elm to build in somewhere in the neighborhood. They might have been my nestlings. I don't know. I've tossed the branch behind a blue bush.

To write like Frost but not quite as well as Frost is the risk this poet runs when he takes to get himself in trim, as it were, by writing poems which are not at all like Frost but which his own, Mr Davison is at his best when he is least self-conscious and allows his talents as a critic and satirist full rein. His collection includes a devastatingly cutting poem about Bertrand Russell which ends:

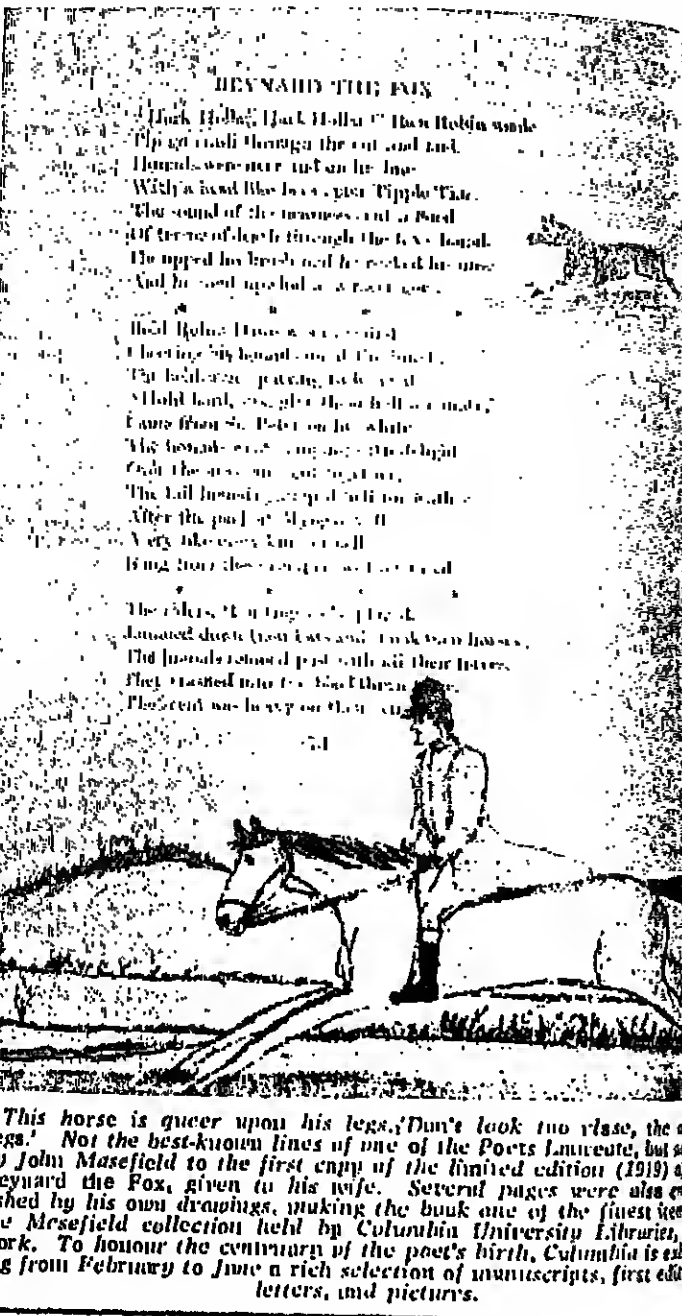
At last geese claim him for the cause of Right, to prop before a crowd or fight a velling in hate the sentences of light. My noble lord, you might have ended better.

Another poem strikes at bourgeois materialism in seven polite stanzas. In this, "La Cambréole Enlaidie" is used by the untrodden citizens of a perfectly clean, neat city (is it a Swiss city? a Dutch city?) for both bank and banqueting hall:

They dance and drink from foamy stels of beer between speeches, flow they love to hear, to hear that cash has saved the country from this devil! "Listen, my friend, what lands your family clinte to live in any other town? Why We walk in silence through another square. "The schools are good," he sighs. "The streets are safe."

There are so many good poems in *A Voice in the Mountain* that a few minor, over-academic failures are scarcely noticed. It is tempting to observe that Barbara Howes is an Elizabeth Bishop who Peter Davison is to Robert Frost, but such a remark would not do Ms Howes justice—nor really Mr Davison either. It is rather a pity Ms Howes so often imitates Ms Bishop when she is in fact, very much herself. Her subjects are New England landscapes, its people, its modes, and very often her own life and friends. Barbara Howes has perfected a chaste, uncompromising style which is also compassionate—a difficult and permanent which requires that the poet be at once gentle and terribly tough. It is encouraging to note that the later poems selected for *A Private Signal* are better than the earlier, more edited ones. A poem called "Jim" is unusually moving in the tale of a simple-minded boy cruelly used by his father until the boy is driven to shoot him, or perhaps to witness his shooting—the boy, however, is maimed for life.

Sound Computed against the background Hill, the slag-dark ground, From that quiet tannery Which was the future. Often, as in this poem, the fact of emotion is realized more vividly than the action, and for this reason Barbara Howes's book does not give quite the impression of professional excellence it seems to aim for. Nevertheless, it is an intriguing and provocative collection. Incidentally, *A Private Signal* (recently named) is one of the most beautifully produced books of poems I have seen this year.



Freely accessible

By Vernon Scannell

KEITH WRIGHT: *The Bear Looked Over the Mountain* 62pp. Salamander. £3.95 (paperback, £2.25).

MARTIN BOOTH: *Extending Upon the Kingdom* 31pp. Poet's Yearbook. I Herbert Road, London N11, 95p.

JOHN CASSIDY: *The Dancing Man* 32pp. Poet's Yearbook. 95p.

SEBASTIAN BARKER: *On the Rocks* 82pp. Marila Brian and O'Keefe. £2.

At a time when so much new poetry is cribbed, fragmented, self-regarding and, it scarcely needs to be added, boring, it is pleasant to be faced by four collections by young or youngish authors all of which contain poems that can be read with real enjoyment. Keith Wright's *The Bear Looked Over the Mountain* arrives with a Poetry Book Society recommendation and offers a body of work of great variety, technical accomplishment and, most importantly, sheer enjoyability. At his best he writes a truly popular poetry, that is to say, his poems are accessible to any literate and ordinarily sensible person; but his writing has nothing in common with the elitist official Poetry Society. Auden is probably an influence, but the most clearly formative one is the literary, shot of folk blues and ballads, and it proves salutary, building a jaunty grace and poignant wit to such pieces as "Red Boots On" and "Elizabeth".

But the poem that I found most affecting belongs to an older literary tradition, appropriately enough, for it is a little elegy for the poet's father, whose generation truly recognizes and applauds its useful folkies:

Broken in my father's face, The line of anguish and pain, And lives of laughter— And in death that turned his face, Fell no dark upon that place. Death with a younger grace, Strange, in his own light.

And he was handsome as he, Claiming his own poetry often and, I imagine, would he be flattered by any suggestion of his presence there; but his new book, *Extending Upon the Kingdom*, is a very interesting collection, always half-aware of the poet's carry a strong sense of real experience observed with clarity and pressed with force and without truthfulness. I recommend especially "Replicas", "Incubus" and "Shooting a Fox".

The other Poet's Yearbook for 1977, John Cassidy's *The Dancing Man*, is like Booth's, a very good value for 95p. He has a thing to say about the unknown primitive beneath the urban Western life, and he says it admirably economy in poem. His original perception. Perhaps the avoidance of the rhetorical is sometimes betrays him into a prosiness, as in the title poem "Tom Robinson", but he is, through the Wall, a very good writer, and his poems are not only accessible but also a pleasure to read.

Sebastian Barker's *On the Rocks* shows no reluctance to play verbal fireworks, indeed it seems that rhetoric has taken by the neck and came very close to strangling him; yet this sequence of sonnets which explore a dangerous love affair rarely relaxes its narrative grip, even at its most outrageous and self-indulgent. I think he will live to blush over many of these poems, some of which suggest a collaboration between Christopher Smart and McGonagall, but there is a true evidence of energy, originality and love of language, and I look forward to seeing how he develops.

As credulous as curious

By Clive T. Probyn

JOSEPH M. LEVINE: *Dr Woodward's Shield* History, Science, and Satire in Augustan England 362pp. University of California Press. £14.75.

Dr Woodward's Shield is a painstaking account of failure and error, of an evolutionary stage in English intellectual life of the early eighteenth century which stirred the learned circles in Europe for a generation and amused the Scribblers with a few brief years. Nowadays, exponents of historical cosmology are apt to produce best-sellers, but Velikovskiy's *Worlds in Collision* (1950) has a place for the man who in so many ways began it all (in the wake of Genesis, of course), the complete and only obscure virtuoso, Dr John Woodward, author of the *Essays towards a Natural History of the Earth* (1695). Apart from its specific subject, Joseph M. Levine's book is a testament of a universal human delusion: the urge to will truth into being, to convert needs into facts, to displace the unknown by the known, to invent a past, to invent a future, to invent a world. Woodward was a representative symptom of his age, a man of whom Locke, Newton, and Leibniz took note. But Woodward this was not enough. Though a faithful student of the Baconian method of observation and experiment, he also had a disabbling urge to be first in the field, and always right. Such is the large scope of Mr Levine's subject, and this is the point at which Woodward and the broader cultural picture merge with each other.

The problem with eighteenth-century natural science in general, and antiquarian studies in particular, lay not in its method but in its dearth of observed data. Too often things were studied before the spectacles of books. Before Woodward, and before the excavations of Pompeii and Herculaneum, an engraving at second hand was as serviceable to the researcher as the archaeological research in situ. The famous shield of Dr Woodward was thus a symbol not so much of intellectual error or even dishonesty as of sheer ignorance. The shield was not in fact Roman at all, but a nineteenth-century fake. Since Woodward's time, the sort of archaeological armchair at the time, its connoisseur identity was forced to conform with what was known.

This "prejudication to believe" as the author delicately puts it, is also evident in the contemporary controversy over authenticity, the problem with eighteenth-century antiquarian studies in general, and antiquarian studies in particular, lay not in its method but in its dearth of observed data. Too often things were studied before the spectacles of books. Before Woodward, and before the excavations of Pompeii and Herculaneum, an engraving at second hand was as serviceable to the researcher as the archaeological research in situ. The famous shield of Dr Woodward was thus a symbol not so much of intellectual error or even dishonesty as of sheer ignorance. The shield was not in fact Roman at all, but a nineteenth-century fake. Since Woodward's time, the sort of archaeological armchair at the time, its connoisseur identity was forced to conform with what was known.

Literary values contribute to cultural hierarchies in important ways, but here they are seen to have blurred what is essentially a mutual

Epistle of Phalaris. In both cases the truth was in fact reached by a method involving skills which were at the time hedged about with "imprudently" precision. Bentley's painstaking scholarship was comparative, analytical and philological; the essential qualifications for the *Memoirs* and the *Dunciade*: a prolific publication list on a bewildering variety of topics, the predisposition to believe his own opinions, religious zeal in his own defence, and an insupportable scientific curiosity. Even though he was "not the equal of the greatest thinkers of his age... only one of the second best", one only has to think of his unpublished works to estimate his curiosity: a history of America, a history of metals, books on the weather, minerals, the Egyptians, and, of course, many pieces on his special subject, fossils. In a great age of collectors (Stonno, Chorleton, Penbroke, and Horley in London; Thoresby in Leeds; Nicolas in Carlisle), Woodward was a representative symptom of his age, a man of whom Locke, Newton, and Leibniz took note. But Woodward this was not enough. Though a faithful student of the Baconian method of observation and experiment, he also had a disabbling urge to be first in the field, and always right. Such is the large scope of Mr Levine's subject, and this is the point at which Woodward and the broader cultural picture merge with each other.

In some respects the process of initiation is generically linked to theft and impersonation, of course, and perhaps a Roman scholar in the periphery is one of the risks. But Mr Levine would see in Woodward the reverse impulse, the attempt to make distinctions between "fact" and "fiction" the essence of a scientific method. Woodward's historical research, though it was not right, though the hypotheses and conclusions were wrong. So that the method Woodward used in "prove" that his shield was Roman was the method used in retracing the steps of the past, the method used in the time, the method was right, though the hypotheses and conclusions were wrong. So that the method Woodward used in "prove" that his shield was Roman was the method used in retracing the steps of the past, the method used in the time, the method was right, though the hypotheses and conclusions were wrong. So that the method Woodward used in "prove" that his shield was Roman was the method used in retracing the steps of the past, the method used in the time, the method was right, though the hypotheses and conclusions were wrong.

One suspects that the dedicated work of scholars such as Hearn, Dodwell and Woodward was too tedious for most of their contemporaries, and may yet be for us. But not for Mr Levine. These, and many more, toiled at the rock face of learning for the sake of a (generally) disinterested scholarly objective, for the sake of the quest to fashion the institutions which we all recognize on the Augustan landscape. Gresham College, the Royal Society, and the coffee-house culture. If Woodward himself gets submerged in the book's progress, then it is because he is the sort of man he was, busily constructing a universal history when the intellectual world was pulsed to fragment and rearranged itself into specialisms. In this respect, too, he was the perfect target for the Scribblers' mafia.

As the argument tacitly assumes for long stretches—is a different matter. But the author makes a strong case for the view that "essence" was Pope's favourite academic device, and his discussion of both Dryden and Pope neatly illustrates the way in which rhetorical devices like zeugma and chiasmus could be supported by phonic means.

The documentation is exceedingly full and the references to secondary material abundant. Twelve pages are devoted to a single footnote, on the subject of vowel pronunciation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These seem inflated, in view of the fact that Professor Adams can reach no firm conclusions—quite apart from the consideration that this is often an academic point (most modern assonances would still have been so, two or three hundred years back, whatever the precise quality of the vowel, or diphthong involved). There are also lengthy reviews of the scholarship on points such as "musicality", metrics, syllable boundaries, and so on. Jargon is not always absent, but technical description does not go much beyond the use of international phonetic alphabet symbols. Phoneticians will not find the discussion very advanced; literary students may feel it is time the counting has to stop. Like Emily Dickinson, Professor Adams possesses good ear and clear eyes (though I am doubtful if "God and work provide a perfect assonance", whether spoken or sung in Cowper's hymn). It would be exceeding the duties of a reviewer to assess how delightful his blind is. I am left with the irrelevant but niggling thought, "What phonic-bills had John Keats?"

On the whole Professor Adams is most successful in the sense where phonic patterns have not yet been recognized. His sections on Dryden, Pope and (a shade more surprising) James Thomson are more convincing than his efforts to show Gray or Browning into the act. The more than 80 alliterations in his 360 lines. In *The Medall* Dryden provides the first 100 lines with "40 stressed vowel echoes to go with 25 alliterations". The comment on Gay's *Trivia* informs us that

the poem, "as important to the scholar as to the literary historian and critic, has just as high a proportion of sound effects, a fact that may be unexpected when one considers the poem's subject matter, the poetic nature of this, perhaps Gay's best, verse."

Professor Adams is interested in three particular modes of oral patterning, and these almost entirely as they affect stressed syllables. The terms alliteration, assonance, and consonance are employed depending on whether the case is found in initial, medial or final sounds. He also pays special attention to phonemes—that is, sounds or clusters of sounds which reinforce a given lexical intention (such as the use of sibilants to indicate swishing or lapping). These terms are set out in an introductory chapter, which has the second function of summarizing the tradition inherited by neoclassical poets: Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton and Denham are given individual attention. There follow essays devoted to Dryden, Pope and Thomson in turn, and a separate chapter in which the author bundles together some twenty eighteenth-century poets ranging from Ambrose Philips and Farwell to Isaac Watts and Edward Parnell. The fullest treatment here is bestowed on Gay and Johnson. Phyllis comes a review of subsequent developments, rather more detailed on the twentieth century than on the Victorian period.

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which young poet "very often echoed his phrase" 2 John Keats, no less. Whose "vowels were even more important to him than were his consonants"? Dylan Thomas, it says here. Name a poet of pessimism whose "it's" may be a small evidence that he urged colour and resolution? It could have been Samuel Johnson, I suppose, but the answer is A. E. Housman. Whose "good ear is almost as important to her success as his clear eyes and her delightful mind"? It could only be Emily Dickinson. But who "employed [it] more than Wilbur Owen (sic), . . . or [it] more than Poe"? Alexander Pope, it turns out.

These facts, amid others more weird and wonderful, emerge from Percy G. Adams's study of phonic devices in poetry. Famous individual too are characterized thus: "quote the entire reference to each case"; "heavy with vowel repetitions"; "he knew how to employ consonance, as when he ended . . . with two short lines that have five final vowels"; "a lower poem with longer lines, thick indeed with attention-getting phonic echoes". These are respectively Don Juan, Collins's "Ode to Evening" and "Sunday Morning". Concerning *The Vanity of Human Wishes* we are told that it has "no more than 80 alliterations in its 360 lines". In *The Medall* Dryden provides the first 100 lines with "40 stressed vowel echoes to go with 25 alliterations". The comment on Gay's *Trivia* informs us that

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Picking up the rules

By P. N. Johnson-Laird

language? It is difficult to be optimistic. Frederick II's experiment was a tragic failure: all the children died, because, it was said, they could not live without loving words from their foster-mothers. Happily, experimental techniques have improved over the past eight hundred years. Unhappily, our psychological knowledge has failed to increase at

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Applicants must have a wide experience of library and information work at a high level and possess good academic and professional qualifications. The successful candidate would be expected to warrant a salary of not less than £10,000 including London Allowance. Further particulars available from the Personnel Officer, Senate House, Malet Street WC1E 7HU (telephone 01-836 8000, extension 15) by whom applications, together with the names and addresses of three referees, should be received not later than March 17, 1978.

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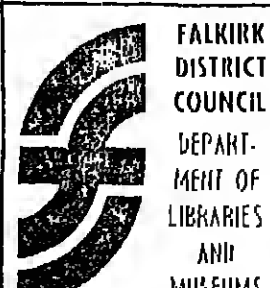
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FALKIRK DISTRICT COUNCIL

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